

## ***COURSE DESCRIPTIONS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT: SPRING 2023***

NOTE: If you have any questions about how a course ‘counts’ in the major, please see your English Major Faculty Advisor. If you do not have a Faculty Advisor, please contact department Associate Chair, Prof. Seamus O’Malley [seamus.omalley@yu.edu](mailto:seamus.omalley@yu.edu)

**Media Exit Project:** If using the OLD requirements (only available for students who declared their major prior to Fall 2021 semester), enroll in English 4002 with the name of your Track Coordinator (Mintz or Gewirtz) and contact that person to get the directions and deadlines. The media exit project will now be completed as part of an advanced course taken with our media studies instructors.

**Internships:** *Must be approved for academic credit before being started.* Internships are required for media studies students wishing to earn a concentration in either journalism or advertising. Fill out the form <https://www.yu.edu/registrar/forms> and give a description of the internship duties to your faculty advisor or your media advisor. Only internships for the advertising and journalism count towards college credit.

**CW Portfolio:** For the creative writing concentration, you complete this requirement in ENGLISH 1900 if you have not done so already. If you are graduating this spring or next fall and have not done the exit project, you should enroll in this course this term to complete it. Any creative writing students who have already taken a previous creative writing class is also eligible to take it, and it is strongly recommended for all writing minors.

## **MEDIA AND CREATIVE WRITING COURSES**

### **ENGL 1722 Broadcast Journalism**

**M 6:00PM-8:30PM**

**Jason Gerwitz**

In this course students will learn how a modern newsroom works. You will be assigned and will generate story ideas and work them through to completion by interviewing, researching, gathering knowledge, using appropriate photo-journalism skills (that you will learn in this class), and ultimately putting it all together for an article.

This class focuses on writing and reporting for digital news outlets. We will start with journalism basics, but students will soon be writing news and feature articles in a digital and modern style. We will cover idea generation, pitches, story production, ethics, basic photography, graphics production, and what is sometimes referred to as second-day stories... where we take news of the day or breaking news and then pull a specific thread to explore a cause or personal story impacted by that day-of or breaking news story. This class will partner with the *YU Observer* to allow, possibly, for the publication of some of your stories.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H. Elective for Media Tracks & Creative Writing. Counts toward Writing Minor

**ENGL 1812 Screenwriting****W 3:00PM-5:30PM****Erik Mintz**

You love movies, right? Otherwise, why are you even reading this? But how well do you *know* movies. No, it's not necessarily about that great movie a parent is always telling you to watch (*Casablanca?* *Citizen Kane?* *The Godfather?* Though you might want to listen to them). Here, it's also about knowing what it takes to *make* a great movie from a terrific screenplay. That means building a great story. Full of plot twists, conflict, well-written (even memorable?) dialogue, and some sort of resolution. But also, getting your audience intrigued by the characters and drawn into the setting, so they'll stay with you for two hours or so. What we set out to do in this class is to understand how to tell that involving story. Prepare to watch and gain some understanding of some great movies and their screenplays. And then prepare to begin writing one, too. Students will begin the process of writing a screenplay, and one half of script will be due for the final project.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Elective for Media Studies Tracks and Creative Writing; counts toward Writing minor.

**ENGL 1900 Advanced Creative Writing****M/W 3:10PM-4:25PM/3:35PM-4:50PM****Matt Miller**

This advanced creative writing course will allow students to further develop their skills in whatever genre of creative writing interests them, including both poetry and prose, fiction and nonfiction. Students will explore what makes each of these modes of writing unique, as well as how they overlap, complicate, and enrich one another. Your workload will be comprised of both reading and writing with an emphasis on your own creative work. You will be expected to produce a substantial, revised, and well-polished portfolio of your creative writing. In addition, you will be learning terms and concepts important to these genres, and you will respond to several outstanding examples of poetry, stories, and creative nonfiction from established writers. You will share your writing with your professor and your fellow students, and we will spend most of the class in "workshop" discussions of your submitted work. You do not need to feel "advanced" in your writing to take this course, but the course does assume students taking the course will have at least some natural interest in and experience with creative writing.

Pre-req: ENGL 1800 or other CW courses. Required for Creative Writing Track Elective for other Media Tracks. Counts as advanced, category II, for Media Studies Requirements.

Note that this course *does not* fulfill the General Education Interpreting Literature and the Arts requirement. It applies toward the elective requirement for Literature and Media track English majors, the requirement for Creative Writing track English majors, and the writing minor.

## LITERATURE COURSES: Category II (Survey) Courses

### ENGL 2004 Survey of British Literature II

M/W 9:00AM-10:15AM

Stephen Spencer

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, a “separation of spheres” phenomenon premised on the gendering of forms of labor developed in the Western world. Household work within the private sphere of the family was gendered feminine, to be performed by mothers and wives, while activity outside the household within the public sphere of politics was considered the sole province of men and, hence, masculine. We have certainly critiqued and redressed the hard edges of this separation phenomenon in the modern world; women are integral to the workforce and politics, and men are much more frequently domestic caretakers. It may be surprising, however, to learn that critiques of this phenomenon existed as it emerged. In this survey of British literature, we will look at the origin, codification, and critique of this phenomenon through the lens of literary production. Because our focus is on literature, we will pay particular attention to the gendering of literary labor; literature was typically published by men, but professional women writers became much more common in these three centuries. The course will be organized to reflect literature from the three major periods we will cover: the Enlightenment, the Romantic movement, and the Victorian era. We will likely look at John Milton’s idiosyncratic portrayal of the paradigmatic biblical justification of the separation phenomenon—Adam and Eve—in *Paradise Lost*, romantic lyrics by male and female poets (including the Wordsworth siblings), a Jane Austen novel, and excerpts from Christian Rossetti’s fantastical narrative *Goblin Market*. We will also look at media that makes these authors and texts relevant in the modern world.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Interpreting Lit and Art. Fulfills II B Intro.

### ENGL 2510 American Literature and Culture

M/W 4:40PM-5:55PM

Matt Miller

What is lost when a book is interpreted as film? What is gained? What happens when a literary writer and a cartoonist approach the same subject, and how do novels and cartoons differ in their ability to represent events? Do song lyrics when read on the page or screen amount to poetry, or are poetry and song fundamentally different? What becomes of history when it is presented in a novel or film, as opposed to by a historian? And who defines these questions and authorizes their answers: the writer? the audience? the scholar or critic? This course asks you to think about literature as engaging with its culture. Drawing upon both literary texts and other kinds of documents, you will look at American literature in a cultural context and explore ways literary and nonliterary texts can speak to one another. Specific subjects include the recent film *Lincoln*, poems by Walt Whitman, novels including *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, photographs of Marilyn Monroe, Betty Boop cartoons, song lyrics by Bob Dylan and others, as well as various other media from American culture in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Interpreting Lit and Art. Fulfills II C Intro. Counts toward American Studies Minor.

**ENGL 2602 Jewish Representations in Literature****T/Th10:25AM-11:40AM****Shaina Trapedo**

From medieval blood libels to *Ulysses*'s Leopold Bloom, the figure of the Jew has loomed large in the Western literary imagination. This course will examine how authors through the ages have represented Jewishness in poetry and prose for their predominantly Christian readers. How are Jews positioned in relation to law, commerce, community, morality, sexuality, wisdom, and faith in the fictional worlds they inhabit? What technical or thematic purpose do Jewish characters serve in the construction of text as a whole? Through deep engagement with a variety of texts, we'll consider to what extent these works reflect, reinforce, challenge, and/or change the existing archetypes and assumptions about Jews in their respective historical and cultural moments, and how these characterizations reverberate in the social history of anti-semitism (and philosemitism). We'll also briefly consider the literary afterlives of these characters in the hands of Jewish writers, such as Will Eisner's graphic novel *Fagin* and Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*. Taught under the auspices of both the English department and the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, this course will feature occasional guest lectures by affiliated humanities faculty. Course requirements include bi-weekly discussion forums, a close-reading presentation, and a final research paper.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Interpreting Lit and Art. Fulfills II A Intro.

**LITERATURE COURSES: Category III (Topics) Courses****ENGL 2750 The Graphic Novel****M/W 3:10PM-4:25PM/3:35PM-4:50PM****Seamus O'Malley**

For most of the twentieth century, comic books were considered a low form of popular entertainment, suitable only for young boys. Around the 1980s, comics grew up and became graphic novels. Will Eisner gave us the first graphic novel, *A Contract with God* (1978), a fragmented memoir of his childhood in the Jewish Lower East Side; Frank Miller transformed the superhero comic Batman into a fable of paranoia in *The Dark Knight Returns* (1986); Alan Moore exploited the dark side of superhero comics for political commentary in *V for Vendetta* (1985) and *The Watchmen* (1986); and, most importantly for reaching a new audience, art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1991), a narrative of his grandfather's memory of the Holocaust, won the Pulitzer Prize.

Subsequent experiments in comic frames, color, texture, and perspective soon followed. The comic book format, invented for action and adventure, proved adept at constructing memoirs, as evidenced by authors like Chester Brown, Seth, and Joe Matt. Comics became not just for little boys, but for grown men as well.

Along the way, however, pioneering female graphic novelists like Linda Barry, Vanessa Davis, Lauren Weinstein, Miriam Libicki and Alison Bechdel launched major contributions to the graphic novel world, Bechdel's *Fun Home* (2007) being hailed by many as the greatest example of the genre to date. Comics are now for women.

This course will explore many aspects of graphic novels, but its primary aim will be to analyze what makes them a unique art form. Not quite literature, not quite art, they have their own set of conventions and readerly assumptions that require a set of critical interpretive practices that borrow from, but cannot imitate, literary or art criticism.

Course requirements include 5 quizzes, reading responses, a 5-page essay and a final exam.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III B Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Prerequisite: English 1100 or 1200H.

**ENGL 2792H-K Comedy and Satire**  
**T/Th 10:25AM-11:40AM**

**Nora Nachumi**

This class is about the relationship between humor—what makes us laugh and why we do so—and two distinct genres: comedy and satire. We will begin by thinking about humor – why it is that we laugh when we do. From there we will move on to theories and examples of comedy and satire, ranging from Shakespeare to the present. In addition to plays and short works of fiction, material may include sitcoms like *I Love Lucy* and *The Simpsons*, classic films like *The Great Dictator* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*; sketch comedy by troupes like Monty Python and Key and Peele; and shows focused on political humor like *Last Week Tonight*. Assignments include regular participation, a group presentation with a significant individual component, short creative and analytical writing assignments, a midterm and a final essay.

This is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course in English, designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why does it matter? It fulfills a III B Intro. requirement for the English Major. It fulfills Interpreting Literature and the Arts. Prerequisite: English 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020

**ENGL 2835 Shakespeare: Histories and Comedies**  
**T/Th 11:50AM-1:05PM**

**Gina Grimaldi**

Derided in 1592 as an “upstart crow”-- an arrogant literary hack from nowhere-- William Shakespeare spent his early professional years in London proving his worth through writing histories and comedies for the stage, eventually establishing his celebrity status. This course covers four remarkable plays from the first half of Shakespeare's theatrical career: *Henry V*, a history from his tetralogy about medieval English monarchical drama (so, *The Crown* of its time), and *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*, comedies that indulge in shenanigans of love and intrigue. Class sessions will involve seminar-style discussions, lectures, and video viewings. Requirements will be: two at-home essays, a short

presentation, and a final research project. I hope we can enjoy Shakespeare via his own words and the echoes he created.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Interpreting Lit and Art. Fulfills III C Intro.

**ENGL 2901/WMNS 1020-N Intro. to Women's Studies: Theory and Practice**

**T/Th 3:00-4:15PM**

**Nora Nachumi**

This course is an introduction to Women's Studies, an interdisciplinary field that grew out of the twentieth-century women's movement. In its early years, those in the field concentrated on the "absence" of women (from literature, history, science, etc.) and worked to add them to the curriculum. Today, Women's Studies is a vast and still growing field of study that draws on many different disciplines in the humanities and the sciences in its efforts to describe, understand and – in many cases – improve women's lives.

The course is organized around diverse representations of female experience. Drawing on a variety of sources—including essays, short fiction and visual media—we will ask how different categories of identity (i.e. race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.) impact each other. We will theorize and articulate our own positions regarding the issues we discuss and engage with positions that differ from our own. Students do not have to define themselves as feminists—or even be sympathetic to feminism as they currently define it—in order to take this course. Like all good conversations, the ones in this class generally benefit from a variety of reasoned opinions.

This is an introductory level "topics" course in English. It fulfills a III D for the English major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisites: English 1100 or 1200 H or FYWR1020. It is required for students pursuing Women's Studies Minor.

**ENGL 2902M Women and Literature**

**T/Th 11:50AM–1:05PM**

**Nora Nachumi**

This course imagines women writers engaged in an ongoing conversation about issues that affect their lives and about the literature that represents this engagement. Drawing primarily on British and American writers from 1700 to the present, the course focuses on poetry, novels and non-fiction prose that resonate—either deliberately or otherwise—with work by other women writers. Each of the texts we read in the course will be placed in dialogue with at least one of the other texts we consider. We will begin with Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, after which we will read Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Woolf's piece also will lead us to Alice Walker's essay, "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens." From Walker's essay, we will move to Harriet Jacobs's memoir, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and Zora Neal Hurston's novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Additional prose fiction, and poetry by women writers will be included as well.

This is an introductory level "topics" course in English. It fulfills a III D for the English major. It fulfills a requirement in the SCW core curriculum, "Interpreting Literature and the Arts." Pre-requisites: English 1100 or 1200 H or FYWR1020. It is required for students pursuing Women's Studies Minor. This course may be counted towards the minor in Women's Studies.

**ENGL 2925 Censored Books: American Literature and Controversy**  
**T/Th 1:35PM-2:50PM**

**Cynthia Wachtell**

Last January a Tennessee school board's ban of *Maus*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel about the Holocaust, made national and even international headlines. Book banning is increasing at a troubling pace in the United States, but the censoring of books is hardly a new phenomenon. In fact, Banned Book Week was launched by the ACLU in 1982.

Since the mid-nineteenth-century, many now classic American works have been subject to censorship efforts, from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, to Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, to Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. In this course we will read and discuss these and other books and examine the efforts to censor them. Along the way we will consider the broad topic of censorship, both in the past and present, as we study the specific controversies that have surrounded books ranging from Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* to Juno Dawson's *This Book is Gay*.

We also will read two notable works that are not American: Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale*, which has long been one of the most-banned books in the United States, and Elie Wiesel's Holocaust memoir, *Night*, which has been challenged for profanity, violence and horror.

Pre-req: ENGL 1100 or 1200H or FYWR 1020. Interpreting Literature and Art. Fulfills III C Intro. Counts toward American Studies minor.

## **ADVANCED LITERATURE COURSE: Category III (Topics)**

**ENGL 3732 Development of the British Novel II: Victorian Fiction**  
**M/W 10:25AM-11:40AM**

**Seamus O'Malley**

During the Victorian period (1837-1901) the novel emerged as the leading literary genre. "Novel" for its day, the form prioritized accessibility, realism, and immediate relevance to the lives of its readers. While there is a cozy quality to many Victorian texts—happy endings best enjoyed over a cup of tea—its authors were responding to a tumultuous period that witnessed the Industrial Revolution, violent conflicts over work and poverty, and the global expansion of the British Empire. Roles for women were circumscribed, yet some of the best works to emerge from the period were by female authors like the Brontë sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne), George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), and Elizabeth Gaskell, all writing in the wake of Jane Austen. No matter who the author, Victorian heroes and heroines had to navigate a rapidly changing society without the clear guidance of precedent, as no previous culture provided a blueprint for the modern world full of factories, capitalists, financiers, imperialists, journalists, and "New Women."

This course will read a small number of big novels. Authors may include George Eliot, Charles Dickens, the Brontës, Thomas Hardy, and Oscar Wilde. Course requirements will include short responses, one short essay and one research essay, and one oral presentation.

This course is a “Forms, Identities, Reading Practices” course designed to pose questions about who writes and reads for whom, in what ways, and why it matters. It is an Advanced course. It fulfills a III B requirement for the English Major. It can be used to fulfill a requirement in the SCW core curriculum: “Interpreting Literature and the Arts.” Pre-requisite: an introductory-level literature course or a straight “A” in ENGL 1100 or 1200H on transcript.